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Viewing cable 06KUWAIT913, REGIONAL CT STRATEGY FOR IRAQ AND ITS NEIGHBORS:

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 06 KUWAIT 000913

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SUBJECT: REGIONAL CT STRATEGY FOR IRAQ AND ITS NEIGHBORS:
RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MARCH 7-8 COM MEETING

REF: STATE 11946

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4(c) and (d)

¶1. (S REL AUS UK) Summary: U.S. Chiefs of Mission and Embassy representatives from Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey met in Kuwait, March 7-8, as a first step to develop a regional counterterrorism strategy. Ambassador for Counterterrorism Henry Crumpton and U.S. interagency representatives participated. The meeting sought to understand the flow of Terrorists/Foreign Fighters (T/FFs) to Iraq and identify countermeasures. Chiefs of Mission considered the possibility that clandestine T/FF support networks might be used to disperse fighters out of Iraq into the broader region, or to form the nuclei of future underground networks targeting regional states and societies.

¶2. (S REL AUS UK) Summary continued: Chiefs of Mission concluded that: (a) T/FF support networks are so adaptive that cutting them at a single point (such as the Syria/Iraq border) will have a limited temporary effect at best, (b) a more effective strategy would degrade the flow by simultaneously attacking all phases of the T/FF lifecycle from recruitment to operational tasking, (c) Syria remains the key transit country for T/FFs, making behavior change in Damascus a key element of the strategy, and (d) the primary motivator for most T/FFs, as reported by U.S. military intelligence, remains perceived U.S. abuses of and lack of due process for detainees at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay - making this issue a key driver of T/FF flows - and a key element undermining international confidence in the United States' ability to conduct an effective war on terrorism that remains true to American values. Chiefs of Mission also identified a series of specific proposals to help build a common regional CT strategy, and agreed to meet in one month (via videoconference) to monitor progress. End summary.

Understanding and Countering T/FF Flows

¶13. (S REL AUS UK) T/FFs originate from countries across North Africa and the wider Middle East, and travel to Iraq via informal networks of sympathizers, facilitators, and supporters. Networks converge on Syria, a key staging and training hub. Crossing into Iraq (often with support from border tribes and traditional smuggling networks), T/FFs move up the Euphrates River Valley (ERV) and other routes toward operational areas in central Iraq. Other T/FFs enter Iraq from terrorist safehavens in northwestern Iran. Iraq's borders are long, porous, and partially controlled; terrain favors infiltration. Experience has shown that T/FF flows must be degraded in depth, well before infiltrators reach the border, if interdiction is to succeed. This suggests greater cooperation on the part of originating countries to stem the flow of individuals before they enter the terrorist pipeline. Moreover, T/FF networks have shown a remarkably high degree of adaptability, evolving rapidly to overcome countermeasures. Thus, Chiefs of Mission concluded cutting T/FF flows in any one place is likely to have a temporary and

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partial effect at best.

¶14. (S REL AUS UK) Instead, we propose a strategy that simultaneously attacks each stage of the T/FF lifecycle: recruitment, movement, staging, reception, and operational tasking. By imposing pressure on each stage of the process concurrently, we can limit the enemy's ability to adapt. This will increase the "friction" in the overall T/FF pipeline, degrading the enemy's ability to move and operate, and ultimately reducing the overall flow of T/FFs. But this approach will require a highly coordinated and flexible response at the whole-of-government level. Thus, we propose an integrated regional network of country teams, working together to create a virtual "region team" that brings to bear all instruments of national power.

¶15. (S REL AUS UK) Chiefs of Mission noted that the long-term security problem in Iraq is neither T/FF flows nor the anti-American insurgency, but rather the potential for sectarian conflict leading to regional destabilization. Meanwhile, the T/FF networks represent the strategic link between the war in Iraq and the broader war on terrorism. They will retain their significance even after the situation in Iraq is stabilized - as potential clandestine subversive/terrorist networks within regional societies, or as a means for dispersal of terrorists from Iraq. Therefore countering the flow of T/FFs is a separate issue from our success in Iraq, is part of our long-term CT effort in the wider region, and needs to be considered within a policy context broader than Iraq.

¶16. (S REL AUS UK) In light of these considerations, the following specific proposals address: (a) immediate countermeasures against T/FF networks, (b) broader efforts to build an integrated regional CT effort, and (c) broader policy issues that directly affect our ability to counter T/FF flows. To the extent these initiatives can be undertaken by nations in the region without prominent USG involvement, it will be easier to enlist the participation of governments like Syria disinclined to cooperate with us directly.

Specific Proposals

¶17. (S REL AUS UK) We propose the following measures to counter T/FF flows and build a responsive regional CT network:

¶1A. Regional biometrics/forensics conference. Different countries collect, store and share biometric and forensic data using different protocols - this hampers cooperation against T/FF flows. Action: Embassy Jordan, with DOJ, is

requested to examine options for a regional biometrics and forensics conference, allowing partner governments to develop shared protocols, and brief Chiefs of Mission on a proposed way forward, at the April 2006 regional CT videoconference.

1B. Regional CT partnerships. Partner nations' intelligence

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services already cooperate on T/FF issues, but there is room for improvement. And cooperation is lacking in other fields such as CT infrastructure, training and development, and CT funding. Action: Embassy Kuwait, with S/CT, will examine options for regional CT partnerships on these issues and will brief options at the April 2006 videoconference.

1C. Saudi Arabia as a focus for regional CT. Partner nations' commitment to countering T/FF flows varies, according to the degree of threat they perceive towards their own countries. Saudi society is a source of T/FF funding and personnel, but the Saudi government perceives it is directly threatened by such networks; increasingly, this is also the case in Syria. Therefore Saudi Arabia working with GCC countries, Yemen and others may be willing to exercise regional leadership - including efforts to foster behavior change in Damascus. Action: Embassy Riyadh, with Embassy Damascus, is requested to canvass options for Saudi leadership in regional T/FF countermeasures, and brief options at the April 2006 videoconference.

1D. State Department representation on JIACG and JIATF(W). The Joint Interagency Coordination Group and Joint Interagency Task Force (West) have proven a highly valuable CT resource that integrates multiple agencies across several countries to achieve a precisely targeted CT effect. State Department representation on these bodies could improve regional integration and serve as a model for future interagency cooperation. Action: S/CT with DOD is requested to study JIATF(W) operations, and report on the feasibility of State Dept representation on JIATFs and JIACG, to the April 2006 videoconference.

1E. Specialist CT Officers. Chiefs of Mission noted that no individual within each Embassy has CT as his or her sole focus. Improving efforts to counter T/FF flows, and developing a regional CT network, requires specialist CT officers with appropriate resourcing - such tasks cannot be conducted by existing embassy personnel at no cost to other programs and priorities. Action: Embassies, working with S/CT, are requested to identify personnel and funding requirements to establish specialist CT officers or other focal points in each post, and brief their requirements at the April 2006 videoconference.

1F. Regional information sharing. Sharing of information on T/FF flows and activities inside Iraq with regional embassies was identified as an area requiring additional effort. Action: Embassy Baghdad with Embassy Damascus and other embassies as needed is requested to identify specific information needs and develop a plan for an ongoing information-sharing mechanism, and report progress to the April 2006 videoconference.

1G. Conversion of JIPTC into Regional CT center. The Jordan Iraqi Policy Training Center is completing the major portion of its mission in training Iraq's new police forces. We propose conversion of this center into a multi-purpose, multi-user facility capable of providing a range of training

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and development assistance to countries across the wider region. Action: Embassy Amman, with S/CT and INL, is requested to develop a plan for transformation and future use of the center, and brief options at the April 2006 videoconference.

1H. Exchanges and Scholarships: People-to-people programs

are a very powerful tool in creating lasting favorable impressions of the United States that undermine the attractiveness of extremist ideology. Chiefs of Mission agreed that the USG needs to vastly and rapidly expand these successful programs as a key long-term instrument to counter extremism. Action: Embassy Kuwait will draft a message to U/S Hughes for approval by other missions supporting further expansion of exchanges/scholarships.

¶I. Private Sector Engagement. Private sector players - including industry, NGOs, think tanks, OSACs and academia - have a valuable role in low-profile, independently funded efforts to reduce ideological support for terrorism and counter T/FF flows. Action: Embassy Riyadh, with Embassy Kuwait and other posts as needed, is requested to develop specific proposals for engaging private sector players in CT initiatives, and report progress to the April 2006 videoconference.

"External" Issues Influencing Success of C/T Efforts

¶8. (S REL AUS UK) A number of current issues have a significant impact on the effectiveness of C/T policy initiatives. These include:

¶A. Treatment of Detainees: Detainee debriefs and intelligence reporting indicate that U.S. treatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, and elsewhere is the single most important motivating factor for T/FFs traveling to Iraq. Regional concern over detainee issues undermines our credibility, and our partners' willingness to cooperate, on a host of CT issues.

¶B. Dealing with Syria: This overall policy reduces our ability to engage constructively on areas such as extremist T/FF flows. We need to consider ways of opening windows of dialogue on issues of key C/T concern.

¶C. The Israeli/Palestinian conflict: This chronic conflict has a distracting and alienating effect. Cooperation with us on C/T issues is eased when Middle Eastern governments and populations perceive an active U.S. role in addressing the fundamental issues.

¶D. The PKK: While cooperative when requested, Turkey has not taken the initiative against the relatively small T/FF flow through its territory. Constructive engagement with Ankara on Turkish concerns regarding the PKK/KGK presence in Iraq could contribute to greater Turkish willingness to actively pursue closing the T/FF pipeline through Turkey. This will become more important as our pressure to stem T/FF

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flows elsewhere leads to heavier use of the route through Turkey.

Maintaining Momentum

¶9. (S REL AUS UK) To maintain the momentum generated by this meeting, embassies intend to meet regularly to coordinate an integrated regional CT approach, based on a network of country teams and developed through face-to-face contact and video and telephone conferences. Chiefs of Mission agreed to hold a series of regional CT strategy meetings, beginning with a videoconference in April - to include posts and interagency representatives, and to review progress and options for specific initiatives. Action: Embassy Kuwait with S/CT is to coordinate the April videoconference.

¶10. (S REL AUS UK) In addition, we request assistance from Washington in obtaining and obligating significant additional funding necessary to undertake this regional CT strategy and increase understanding among decision-makers and budget analysts of the CT challenges in our region. To focus

efforts and support budget requests, NEA and EUR should consider including in the CT portion of their BPPs a specific strategy to defeat terrorism and counter T/FF flows in the region. Congressional staffers from appropriations committees and OMB officials could assist in bridging this gap, as part of a coordinated legislative outreach.

Meeting Participants

¶11. (S REL AUS UK) Participants at the 7-8 March meeting in Kuwait included:

-- Amman: Ambassador David Hale, Regional Affairs Officer
Peter Enzminger
-- Ankara: Pol/Mil Counselor Timothy Betts, Regional Affairs
Officer Thaddeus Troy
-- Baghdad: DCM David Satterfield, Deputy ORA Chief Phillip
Reilly, Major Anita Harvey, SOIC MNF-I
-- Damascus: CDA Stephen Seche, Regional Affairs Officer
Thomas Sylvester
-- Kuwait: Ambassador Richard LeBaron, Pol/Mil Affairs Chief
Joseph Forcier
-- Riyadh: Ambassador James Oberwetter, Bilateral Programs
Officer Dr. Jim Leong
-- State Dept/Washington: CT Ambassador Henry Crumpton, PDAS
S/CT Frank Urbancic, Senior Strategy Advisor S/CT Dr. David
Kilcullen, INL DAS William Todd, NEA/I Director Richard Olson.
-- DOD: BG Douglas Raaberg, CENTCOM; MG Stanley McChrystal,
SOCOM; BG Robert Caslen, Joint Staff; DAS/D Mario Mancuso,
SO/LIC.
-- NCTC: MG Jeffrey Schloesser, Brent Hartley
-- CTC: Peter Minehart, CTC-Iraq
-- USAID: Mark Ward, D/AA Asia and Near East
-- DOJ: Bruce Swartz, DAAG

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-- DNI/NIC: Susan McCormick, Transnational Threats Office

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/kuwait/>

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State Department's Classified SIPRNET website

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